



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105 - 3784

CHRISTOPHER C. HEALY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

ANNE S. LAMONICA
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
FOR EDUCATION

LORI A. STEWART
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Testimony in Opposition to
House Bill 7150, Section 1

*AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S
BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION*

Education Committee Public Hearing
March 1, 2019
Legislative Office Building, Room 2E

**PLEASE OPPOSE SECTION 1 OF GOVERNOR'S BILL 7150 -AN ACT IMPLEMENTING
THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION.**

On behalf of Catholic school families and their 28,000 children, we are respectfully writing to oppose Section 1 of House Bill 7150.

Eliminating state funding for children's health and safety should not be a starting point for budget negotiations.

Connecticut parents have many different, wonderful options - public schools, charter schools, magnet schools, faith-based schools, private schools, and home schools - for our children's educations; and our options and decisions should continue to be encouraged and supported at the State Capitol.

Our Catholic schools students, along with the members of our parishes, all work very hard to perform charitable works of mercy in our communities – providing hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer work at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, nursing homes and hospitals – and we donate hundreds of thousands of dollars and goods to other charities.

For more than 50 years, the Connecticut General Assembly has recognized the educational benefits that nonpublic schools including Catholic schools, Jewish schools and private schools – provide to school children across the state. The legislature has recognized that our schools help lower the public school education budgets while fulfilling the state's mandate on parents to educate their children.

Moreover, the two statutes that mandate aid to nonpublic school children are rooted in public health and safety concerns. Because of this, the legislature has supported secular student aid programs that: (1) have the state and the towns provide healthcare services to nonpublic school students under Section 10-217a; and (2) have the state and the towns provide intra-town bus transportation for nonpublic school students under section 10-281.

Specifically regarding the healthcare services, Section 10-217a provides:

Each town or regional school district which provides health services for children attending its public schools in any grade, from kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall provide the same health services for children in such grades attending private nonprofit schools therein, when a majority of the children attending such schools are residents of the state of Connecticut (emphasis added).

This highlighted text above provides a strong legislative statement – that was first put in the law in 1967 – that the state should provide the same healthcare services for all schoolchildren, whether the children attend public schools or nonpublic schools. It was the product of the Public Health Committee, because of the affliction of debilitating infectious diseases upon children. The General Assembly recognized that the public's best interest required care for children in school, the prime breeding ground for infections.

Now, unfortunately, Section 1 of HB 7150 terminates the long-standing compact for all children, by proposing that the nonpublic schools must pay for the costs of the healthcare services.

Without our school nurses, our schools will be unable to comply with mandatory immunization laws.

Certainly, this proposal will drive up tuition costs at for our school parents, who are already paying for these services through their taxes. Some parents will have to enroll their children in public schools – which, in turn, will increase the costs of public schools.

Our parents are good state and local taxpayers; and the state and the towns receive incredible financial relief when our kids are not in the public schools.

An alternative approach would require that all nonpublic school children be dually enrolled in public schools so that their local boards of education could receive the necessary funds to support school health and transportation services, among others.

Please do not support Section 1 of HB 7150.

Thank you.

Anne LaMonica, Associate Director for Education, Catholic School Parent & Alumna
Lori Stewart, Legislative Liaison, Catholic School Parent & Alumna